

Governor's Commission on Hispanic Affairs
June 18, 2008
Meeting Summary

Attendance:

Commissioners

Yolanda Maria Welch, Chair
Richard Cook
Javier Bustamante
Elizabeth C. Bellavance
Lydia Espinosa Crafton
Veronica Cool
Ricardo Martínez
Luisa Montero-Diaz
Ricardo Alberto Flores
Christina M. Diaz-Malone
Carmen Ortiz Larsen
Sonia E. Mora
Veronica A. Cool
Dr. Lea Ybarra
Hector Manzano
Jessy Mejia
Nicolas Ramo
Maria T. Pinto Johnson

GOCI Staff

Tony Bridges, Director of Outreach
Izzy Patoka, Executive Director
Tony White, Communications
Josh Russin, Legislative Affairs

Ex - Officios

Stacy Rodgers, Ex – Officio DHR
Adam Ortiz, Ex – Officio DLLR
Jorge Austrich, Ex –Officio DBED
Rosa Cruz, Ex – Officio MHEC
Susan C. Spinnato, Ex –Officio MSDE

Guest Speakers:

Hiram Burch, MD Department of Legislative Services

Staff:

Ruby Stemmler, Executive Director GCHA
Miguel Boluda, Outreach Coordinator, GCHA
Vivian E. Kinney-Milian, Administrative Aide GCHA

VIP Guests:

Kim C. Dine, Chief of Police Frederick City
Rabbi Morris Kosman, Beth Sholom Community Center in Frederick
David Gray, Frederick County Commissioner
Frank Johnson, Mayor of Middletown

Public Input:

Kim C. Dine, Chief of Police Frederick City
Rabbi Morris Kosman, Beth Sholom Community Center in Frederick
David Gray, Frederick County Commissioner
Frank Johnson, Mayor of
Luis, Borunda, USHYEE
Jorge Rivas, Mid Atlantic Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
James Upchurch, Non Profit Housing Developer

Audrey Creighton, Maryland Hispanic Bar Association
Irene Packer-Halsey, United Latinos for Greater Frederick
Ana Kontis, Casa de Maryland
Vanessa Rini-Lopez
Maria Rodríguez
María Tereza Shultz
Maggie Lebherz
José González

Summary:

- Chair Maria Welch opened the meeting and introduced special guests and visiting officials.
- Chair Welch introduced guest speaker Hiram Burch, from the Department of Policy Analysis of the Maryland Department of Legislative Services.
- Mr. Burch presented a report summarizing data pertaining the Hispanic community of Maryland based the 2008 publication on International Immigrations: The Impact on Maryland Communities.
- Chair Welch, introduced Ruby Stemmler, Executive Director, GCHA,
- Ms. Stemmler, thank Mr. Burch not only for his presentation but also as an invaluable source for the information that was obtained and added to the GCHA Annual report. Ms. Stemmler also thanked commissioner Jessy Mejia for her work and input into the GCHA Annual report, the ex-officios that helped with providing information and documents for the annual report.
- Ms. Stemmler reported on the visit to Salisbury MD with Chair Welch where attended a meeting of Bienvenidos to Delmarva (BEACON); they were able to ascertain the conditions of Hispanic residents in Salisbury and were given a tour of the MVA offices by Commissioner Bellavance.
- Ms. Ruby Stemmler proposed two motions:
 - First motion was to request that the commission meeting set for the Month of October be set in Salisbury State University on a Friday evening instead of a Wednesday; this motion was second by Commissioner Bellavance and approved.
 - Second motion was to create a Hispanic Heritage Month Committee, which would be in charge of organizing, participating, speakers for organizations and sponsorships for activities. Veronica Cool seconds this motion; Commissioner Larsen seconds it with the understanding that each committee should have a representative at this committee. Commissioner Bustamante, inquired about the purpose of this committee. The motion was approved.
- Chair Welch moved to the next item in the agenda inviting the chairs of each sub-committee to give their reports. Each chair presented the work plan developed by each committee (see attached summary) in the following order:
 - Sonia Mora, Chair - Subcommittee Health & Human Services
 - Dr. Lea Ybarra, Chair- Subcommittee Education
 - Christina Diaz Malone, Chair- Subcommittee Housing & Community Development

- Carmen Ortiz Larsen, Chair - Subcommittee Business Economic Development and Workforce
 - Ricardo Flores, Co-Chair - Subcommittee Information and Public Policy (Public Policy)
 - Javier Bustamante, Co-Chair – Subcommittee Information and Public Policy (Information)
- Adam Ortiz, Ex-officio for the Department of Labor Licensing & Regulation indicated that this is the time to educate people on the issues regarding foreclosure and other matters.
 - Chair Welch; welcome a new Ex-officio for the DHR, Stacy Rodgers.
 - Chair Maria Welch introduced and proceeded to give the floor to Vice Chair Ricardo Martinez who at this time would be the moderator of the meeting.
 - All attendees that provided their information were given 3 to 4 minutes to speak. In Frederick County; Center stage were the Frederick County Chuck Jenkins Sheriff' program that authorizes deputies to enforce the federal 287(g) immigration laws the issues that this has brought to the Hispanic Community In Frederick County, most of the claims of the Frederick's Hispanic community that the enforcement has "filled some families with fear and created a sense of bigotry in others."
 - Some of the speakers brought tears to the eyes of the present. Also, some of the speakers had a clearer vision of the issue. And everyone was very grateful for the presence and presentation done by Kim C. Dine, Chief of Police Frederick City, whom has been a supporter and has help may Hispanics in Frederick.

Public Comment:

- Chief Kim C. Dine of Police Frederick City Police Department, he started by welcoming the commission to Frederick City, He has been the Chief of Police for the Past 6 years and is happy to inform the he has been able to have a great relationship with all the Hispanics in his jurisdiction.
- Rabbi Kosman Questioned about the influx of undocumented child, that we must be proactive in informing the Hispanic community of the need for documentation. People would understand the influx of increased population if they understand the contributions of this population.
- David Gray, Frederick County Commissioner said the fact that Frederick County has seen the largest increase from 4,664 in 2000 to 11,537 in 2006 may be a significant reason for some of the perceived hostilities. Regard the influx of the Hispanic community in Frederick County they are proud of the diversity. That the contentious voices of the area not all of Frederick County is under the same voice. We love our diversity and would like to dispel the image that we are not friendly.
- Frank Johnson Mayor – provided information regarding the increase on population. In terms of welcoming to the melting pot immigrants.
 - Chair Welch interceded and said that the commission was here to help in anyway that we can to take this information back to the governor, to see what can be done.

- Izzy Patoka, from the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives, first spoke about commissioner Bellavance thanked her for the time she has provided to the commission as a volunteer. Mr. Patoka thanked the commissioners and also thanked Frederick County and City for the Invitation to have a meeting in their mist.
- Vanessa Rini-Lopez, I emigrated from Louisiana, I just do not understand how Sherriff Jenkins obtained this type of authority (287G) to do the damage he is doing in the community. We do not know if the Sherriff's officers are knocking on the door or if it the regular police.
- Chief Dine interceded and was given a reassuring applause. Chief Dine I have tried to set community civil rights and assure people that ICE will be monitoring the Sheriffs office trying to do this.
- Ms. Maria Rodríguez, El Salvador,
- Maria Teresa Shultz, I have lived in Frederick county and know that Sherriff Jenkins and Commissioner Jenkins have made this illegal council
- Antonio Ramirez- 20 years resident in Frederick. What is the governor's position? We are afraid 20 are guys in jail. I came 20 years ago I am a citizen, I came to have a voice and vote. And I am afraid; the Frederick County Sherriff is destroying the quality of life we have, destroying families in Frederick.
- Maggie Lebherz – Life long resident of Frederick I am very happy that you are here, and this change was done without a public forum. Thank you again for coming to Frederick.
- Jose Gonzalez – Translated by Carmen Larson, I am originally from Guatemala, I have been here for the past 3 years and I represent part of the Hispanic community and we are worried that what is happening in Frederick County will happen all over. This 287G law is disintegrating families, destroying the trust and relationship that has been created with the police. Even though we trust the Police Officers from Frederick, however, when a police officer knocks on the door you do not know if the Officer is from Frederick or if he is from the Sheriffs office. I would like to ask to integrate into your agenda the immigration issues.
- Luis Borunda – USHYEE, provided information about the program which provided \$25,000 to Hispanic students at \$5,000.00 each for continuing education, \$14,000 for the Hispanic Youth Symposium.
 - Congratulated Dr. Lea Ybarra for being one of the Hero Awardees for the Youth Symposium
 - to Chair Welch for being the chair of the Hispanic youth Symposium
- Mr. Jorge Rivas, from the Mid Atlantic Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; Spoke about the history of immigration all over the world. And that he had seen it in the entire world including his own country Ecuador. Most people do not understand. Jews could not vote 100 years ago in the United States. This is a bella terra but there is a problem here. Spoke about Oscar Wilde whom wrote Our Town. He said he has lived here since 1971 in Frederick County. It is very important to do this to deal with discrimination. He asked the commission to find a positive way to deal with this discrimination problem.
- James Upchurch, Non Profit Housing Developer; bias statements about Hispanics in this area; wrote that stereotyping was a way to inoculated Hispanics and others as human beings. He was concerned with this.

- , resident of Frederick county; I hope the commission can see what our problems are and offer possible solutions.
- Audrey Creighton- Maryland Hispanic Bar Association; She offered as a member of the MD Hispanic Bar Association; that Hispanic lawyers would be able to assist and help in any way to contact her.
- Irene Packer Halsey- United Latinos for Greater Frederick; her organization and additional 5 organizations in Frederick would like the commission and the governor to help in this issue. She said time is of the essence. Dialog with ICE regarding the process, inform the community of the process and help so that the community would not be so afraid of someone knocking at their door.
- Ana Kontis; CASA de MARYLAND; I have been a resident of Frederick for over 10 years, survivor of domestic violence. I love Frederick and this County. That is why I am worried of what is happening regarding law 287. I have helped some of the families and it is very painful to see all of the confusion and the parents that have gone. Other families are worried about their own positions in Frederick. Some of them won't go out of their houses. They are worried that they will be stopped on the street and picked up and deported. The sheriff's office is making any excuse for deportation, or to put people in jail. And there is panic on the streets. I am here to represent Hispanics that and asking that some one will do something about this and offer help.
- Chair Maria Welch closed the meeting saying that the commission would be looking at the process and informing themselves better about what is happening here in Frederick County. Also, she thanked Chief Dine for all the work that he has been doing for the Hispanic community in Frederick City. Also, that there is an upcoming Latino Festival in Frederick in September 2008.
- The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm

EDUCATION

Chair: Lea Ybarra

Mission:

Develop a stated vision that will guide the committee's work specific goals with a timetable

- Collect and evaluate the resources and data on Latino students in Maryland in order to establish a baseline, determine the needs and set the goals.
- A presentation to the board and other policy-making bodies on the state of Latino education in Maryland.
- Identify the successful programs/best practices/lessons learned in addressing Latino student needs
- Identify the top one or two programs and help to inform the community statewide and develop a method of establishing a statewide communication mechanism for the Latino community
- Address the economic impact of the proposed in-state tuition

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Chair: Sonia Mora

Mission:

Enhance the health and well being of Latinos living in the state of Maryland by developing, implementing, and/or monitoring strategies that respond to the health-related needs of Latinos in Maryland through the establishment of partnerships with key stakeholders including public administrators, service providers, policy makers, legislators, and Latino community leaders.

- Improve the Collection, Analysis, and Reporting of Health Data for Latinos
 - Work with the DHMH to ensure that its data collection systems include the ethnic category of “Hispanic/Latino”, as well as “country of origin,” and preferred language.
 - Work with DHMH and local jurisdictions to ensure that local health departments and managed care organizations receiving state funds are aware of the need to follow best practices and federal and state guidelines for the collection, analysis, and reporting of racial and ethnic data.
- Ensure Access to and Quality of Health Care
 - Work with the DHMH to improve current processes in place for enrollment of eligible individuals to the Maryland Health Insurance Program and to increase the use of medical services under this program.
 - Work with other key stakeholders to advocate for health insurance for all individuals living in Maryland.
- Ensure the Availability of Culturally and Linguistically Competent Health Services
 - Work with the DHMH to develop and implement the necessary policies, structures, and practices to systematically provide access to Limited English Proficiency Latinos.

BUSINESS, ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Chair: Carmen Ortiz Larsen

Mission:

To increase the sustainability of Hispanic Business and increase the representation of Hispanics in the workforce at all levels.

- Identify key priorities in the Hispanic small business community and develop strategies for advocating or supporting its implementation
- Identify needs closing the gap for Hispanics in mid to upper management and develop strategies for advocating or supporting its implementation.
- Facilitate linkages/communication between Hispanic business organizations and economic development organizations throughout the State.
- Establish a website/directory of Hispanic small business by product/service and a job board for Latino professionals and management staff.

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Chair: Christina Diaz Malone

Mission:

To mitigate homeownership foreclosures in the Hispanic community due to predatory and unsafe lending practices and to sustain efforts to increase homeownership rate of Hispanics in the state. To increase awareness and promote involvement on issues related to transportation and community outreach.

- Develop strategies to engage community on statewide foreclosure prevention and foreclosure intervention efforts
- To encourage and support legislation that protects the community from unscrupulous lending and predatory lending practices
- Work to promote opportunities to work with the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development and existing service delivery network to ensure Latino participation in programs and to increase homeownership rate
- To promote creation of a network of education and information providers in the community that can deliver accurate information on home purchase and home refinancing
- To work with community leaders to ensure input into issues pertaining to transportation and other community development issues

PUBLIC POLICY AND INFORMATION

Public Policy: Chair: Ricardo Flores

Mission: To monitor and disseminate to the general public and Maryland government information on public policy matters of importance to the Latino community.

- Draft and publicize as-it-happens email updates on new legislation relevant to the Latino community during each General Assembly session; draft and publicize periodic updates the remainder of the year on other policy issues as necessary.
- Meet with the departmental heads of each Maryland state agency that is dealing with issues of importance to the Hispanic community.

- Help to raise funds to support the New Americans Initiative, a large-scale civic engagement program helping immigrants become citizens and responsible civic participants.

Information: Chair, Javier Bustamante

Mission: To monitor, disseminate and when necessary respond to media coverage of matters of importance to the Latino community.

- Create a comprehensive database on media personnel and outlets: reporters, print media outlets, TV, radio and web-based outlets.
- Make available to the general public a Speaker's Bureau of Hispanics accomplished in their fields.
- Respond to negative coverage of Latinos in the local Maryland media, either through partners in the field, in Commissioner's individual capacities, or when possible as a Commission.
- Create an updated, user friendly and interactive Commission website.
- Create a new commission brochure.